

## **Hurricane Preparedness Week**

**This year Hurricane Preparedness Week is May 21 – 27, 2006.**

According to NOAA's website on the National Hurricane Center, "history teaches that a lack of hurricane awareness and preparation are common threads among all major hurricane disasters. By knowing your vulnerability and what actions you should take, you can reduce the effects of a hurricane disaster."

Hurricane hazards come in many forms: storm surge, high winds, tornadoes and flooding. This means it is important for your family to have a plan that includes all of these hazards.

### **Storm Surge**

Storm surge is simply water that is pushed toward the shore by the force of the winds swirling around the storm. This advancing surge combines with normal tides to create the hurricane storm tide, which can increase the mean water level 15 feet or more. In addition, wind driven waves are superimposed on the storm tide. This rise in water level can cause severe flooding in coastal areas, particularly when the storm tide coincides with the normal high tides. Because much of the United States' densely populated Atlantic and Gulf Coast coastlines lie less than 10 feet above mean sea level, the danger from storm tides is tremendous.

### **High Winds**

The intensity of a landfalling hurricane is expressed in terms of categories that relate wind speeds and potential damage. According to the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale, a Category 1 hurricane has lighter winds compared to storm in higher categories. A Category 4 hurricane would have winds between 131 and 155 mph and, on the average, would usually be expected to cause 100 times the damage of the Category 1 storm. Depending on circumstances, less intense storms may still be strong enough to produce damage, particularly in areas that have not prepared in advance.

### **Tornadoes**

Hurricanes can also produce tornadoes that add to the storm's destructive power. Tornadoes are most likely to occur in the right-front quadrant of the hurricane. However, they are also often found elsewhere embedded in the rain bands, well away from the center of the hurricane.

### **Inland Flooding**

When it comes to hurricanes, wind speeds do not tell the whole story. Hurricanes produce storm surges, tornadoes and often the most deadly of all – inland flooding. Inland flooding can be a major threat to communities hundreds of miles from the coast as intense rain falls from these huge tropical air masses."

Additional hurricane preparedness information can be found on NOAA's website for "*National Hurricane Awareness Week*" at [www.nhc.noaa.gov](http://www.nhc.noaa.gov).

Another useful website is [www.accuweather.com](http://www.accuweather.com), which predicts the threat of a major hurricane strike for the Northeast. According to Joe Bastardi, Chief Forecaster of the AccuWeather.com Hurricane Center, "the Northeast coast is long overdue for a powerful hurricane, and with the weather patterns and hydrology we're seeing in the oceans, the likelihood of a major hurricane making landfall in the Northeast is not a question of if but when".

The following flood safety preparedness guide is attached with important information of what to do to prepare for a storm as well as what you will need once the storm has passed.

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